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The
Art of Securing
Better Teaching
Positions



A Handbook for Teachers

THE
ART OF SECURING BETTER
TEACHING POSITIONS

A HANDBOOK FOR TEACHERS

BY

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CHAPTER I

THE TEACHING OUTLOOK

ONE morning the postman delivered the following letter:

GENTLEMEN:

I have been a professor of experience for twelve years. Will you kindly tell me what is the opportunity for professing in Porto Rico?

Little did I suppose when I opened this letter that it would ever be made the text of a book for teachers; but the thoughts which prompted the writing of the letter, viz., what is the opportunity for teaching, what chances are there for me, how can I succeed in securing a good position, are, indeed, in every teacher's mind, although they may not be expressed so uniquely. Whether the professor later embarked for the island, there to "profess" in the noble art of bootblacking or in the more humble duties of the schoolroom, as the case may be, and whether he there accumulated wealth and fame are matters which are shrouded in as much mystery as is the solution of the problem presented in the closing paragraph of Mr. Stockton's famous novel.¹

I do not claim to know much about school conditions in Porto Rico, but I have given considerable

¹"The Lady or the Tiger." Frank R. Stockton. Charles Scribner's Sons.

study to those prevailing in the United States, especially in New England, and it is with the thought of helping teachers to secure positions in this more limited field that I have undertaken the preparation of this little volume, hoping that something of value will be found in it both to the new teacher and to those already holding positions but desiring better ones.

Now no profession in the world is more noble than that of teaching, none requires more earnest thought and training, and yet it is too often made merely an avocation, a stepping-stone, a means of earning money for the study of law or medicine, or, in the case of women teachers, a pleasant occupation until they get married. This does not mean that it is not perfectly right for a woman to become a teacher, even though she expects to remain in the schoolroom only a few years; but in all fairness to her pupils she should as thoroughly prepare herself as though she were planning to make teaching her life work. Nor does the fact that a man expects later to enter another profession necessarily prevent him from making a good teacher; and certainly the experience gained in the schoolroom often proves of inestimable value in after life. But the fact still remains that one has no right to teach who does not feel the sacredness of the trust enough to make as adequate preparation as his or her time and means will allow.

The first thing to be considered in entering the profession of teaching is one's fitness for the work. In these days of scientific investigation of social prob-

lems it is becoming more generally recognized that failure is less often caused by lack of ability than by engaging in an occupation for which one is not fitted. Want of appreciation of what a particular business or profession demands from those who enter it is responsible for a deal of regret and discontent.

It is undoubtedly true that in the life of every one, up to a certain point, chance seems to rule. But there comes a time when we begin to think for ourselves; and if this awakening is not delayed too long, it is possible to shape the after life in accordance with a fixed plan.¹

We are living in an age of progress. A few years ago only the city man had his telephone; now the country farmer has not only his 'phone but his auto, and next year he will have his aëroplane. The thrifty housewife no longer plies the broom, but pumps out the dust with a "vacuum cleaner"; and in all lines of business new methods are being inaugurated. Nor is the change confined to mercantile lines; in medicine and in surgery many cherished theories have been overturned.

So in the teaching field we find a marked change in conditions. Formerly in our country districts each little hamlet had its own school, where the teacher, receiving from four to six dollars a week, taught five

¹A very suggestive and inspiring book on the subject of choosing one's life work has recently been published and should be on every teacher's desk. Not only will it help her to improve her own plan of life, but it will be of infinite help in assisting her to guide her pupils into the occupations for which Nature fitted them. "Choosing a Vocation," by Frank Parsons. \$1.00. Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston.

or six pupils. Today, instead of maintaining innumerable petty schools, the pupils are transported to one central school, which makes it possible to pay the teacher more salary and consequently to get one better fitted for the work. Then, too, the employing of superintendents who are trained educators and to whom is given the selection of teachers tends to raise the standard of requirements, as insistence is more and more being placed upon special training. Nothing indicates this change more than the statistics of the departments of education of the several states. Take, for example, Massachusetts.

In 1888 the number of teachers required in the public schools of that state was 8,559, of which number only 2,677, or 31 per cent, were normal graduates. In 1898 the number of teachers required was 11,678, of which 4,428, or about 38 per cent, were normal graduates. In 1908 the number required was 14,781, but of these 7,448, or over one-half, were normal graduates.

The same conditions prevail in Rhode Island. A letter just received from the Commissioner of Education of that state gives the following figures:

Year	Total number teachers	College training	Normal or special training
1894	1,554	95	558
1899	1,913	217	905
1904	2,055	246	1,137
1909	2,294	326	1,373

This value of special training for grade work is brought out most strongly in a communication from the Commissioner of Connecticut, who says:

“Some towns refuse to consider teachers unless they are normal graduates. I do not know of any towns that accept unconditionally college graduates for the schools below the high school. My opinion is that training is more and more becoming a condition of employment. College graduates without training are no better than high school graduates without training.”

These facts indicate the condition which is becoming more and more general, viz., that special preparation is as necessary for a teacher as for a physician or surgeon, and while it will undoubtedly always be true that school positions can be secured without the teacher's having special training, and even in some cases where she is not as well posted as some of her older pupils, yet to neglect to provide herself with this special training is deliberately to close the door of opportunity to the best places. The fact that one's grandmother was a successful teacher without ever seeing a normal school does not prove that her descendants are likely to attain success with only a high school training, for much is required of a teacher today which was never thought of in her time.

After due consideration has been given to the subject of choosing a vocation, and the young high school graduate has decided that she is by nature fitted for the profession of teaching, that it is the one thing above all others which she prefers to do, not

because she thinks the hours are easy, a steady income assured, the actual working year short and the vacation season long, but because she really loves the work and means to give it her best efforts and highest ideals, two important questions present themselves: how best to fit herself properly for her work, and how to secure a good school. Both questions call for careful consideration on the part of any one thinking of becoming a teacher. Nor are they separate and distinct questions, for they are closely allied one to the other, the matter of training determining in great measure the kind of school for which one will afterwards be eligible.

In his report, the Commissioner of Education of the United States points out the fact of the constantly decreasing number of men teachers in our schools. In 1880, in the schools of this country, 42.8 per cent of the teachers were men. In 1890 this was reduced to 34.5 per cent, in 1900 to 29.9 per cent; while the 1909 report states that of 495,463 teachers only 104,495, or 21.1 per cent, were men. This means that, taken as a whole, there are less than half as many men teachers today as there were thirty years ago. But if we take some of the individual states we shall find the ratio of men to women still smaller. New Hampshire reports 95 per cent of her teaching force to be women. There is, therefore, no question of the fact that in the teaching profession women are in the great majority; and since in our good land it is the majority which rules, "vox populi, vox Dei," we shall in the following chapters use the feminine per-

sonal pronouns, with the understanding that, according to the orthography of a certain college graduate, they will also include the "masculine sect."

It is pleasing to note that the salaries of teachers are increasing. In Massachusetts the average salary in 1888 was \$119.34 for men and \$44.88 for women. In 1898 this had increased to \$137.41 for men and \$51.44 for women. In 1908 the average salary for men was \$155.95, while the salary for women teachers had increased to \$59.58; and taking the country as a whole, the increase during this period has been from \$42.43 to \$62.35 for men, and from \$34.27 to \$51.61 for women. A table, compiled from the 1909 report of the Commissioner of Education of the United States, giving the number of men and women teachers and the average salaries in the different states, will be found on following pages.

Another cause of congratulation is the broadening of the teaching field, and the indications are that during the next decade it will be still further extended.

The growth of Correspondence Schools, the methods of which have been demonstrated as pedagogically sound when rightly conducted, not only offers an opportunity to earnest men and women to supplement lack of training without the necessity of giving up positions to attend school, but also offers employment outside of their school duties to a limited number of teachers, to whom is intrusted the task of correcting the papers which the students send in.

The kindergarten movement, another phase of what our forefathers would call our "new-fangled"

State	Number of male teachers	Number of female teachers	Average monthly salary of male teachers	Average monthly salary of female teachers
Alabama	2,740	5,017	\$44.65	\$38.49
Arizona	109	536	99.50	75.06
Arkansas	3,963	4,334	53.00	41.00
California	1,376	8,846	114.48	77.02
Colorado	796	4,495	80.65	60.03
Connecticut . .	329	4,696	115.07	50.50
Delaware	156	741	72.82	34.70
Dist. of Columbia	196	1,387	92.27	92.27
Florida	835	2,762	58.95	40.35
Georgia	2,860	8,036	. .	. .
Idaho	471	1,581	85.59	60.89
Illinois	5,411	23,113	82.12	60.76
Indiana	6,147	10,524	62.60	55.80
Iowa	3,009	24,941	66.01	44.20
Kansas	2,465	10,520	55.02	45.17
Kentucky	3,619	6,190	. .	. .
Louisiana	1,521	5,445	66.13	45.81
Maine	700	6,179	39.84	30.68
Maryland	880	4,477	. .	. .
Massachusetts .	1,281	13,497	155.95	59.58

State	Number of male teachers	Number of female teachers	Average monthly salary of male teachers	Average monthly salary of female teachers
Michigan	2,433	14,974	\$71.52	\$48.58
Minnesota	1,577	12,853	74.30	45.23
Mississippi	3,148	6,298	. .	. .
Missouri	4,840	13,158	57.78	51.45
Montana	221	1,086	99.00	60.00
Nebraska	1,242	9,113	69.51	49.33
Nevada	43	371	122.02	77.00
New Hampshire	255	2,744	41.83	36.01
New Jersey . .	1,106	9,173	. .	. .
New Mexico . .	422	643	52.05	51.58
New York	4,996	37,592	. .	. .
North Carolina .	3,119	7,431	. .	. .
North Dakota .	1,166	5,198	53.92	45.68
Ohio	8,267	18,688	67.00	52.50
Oklahoma	1,237	7,499	57.83	49.22
Oregon	783	3,460	65.64	50.16
Pennsylvania . .	7,488	26,525	61.23	46.85
Rhode Island . .	195	2,119	126.09	59.54
South Carolina .	2,562	3,874	. .	. .
South Dakota . .	950	4,605	67.71	47.27

State	Number of male teachers	Number of female teachers	Average monthly salary of male teachers	Average monthly salary of female teachers
Tennessee . . .	3,682	6,323	. .	. .
Texas	6,054	12,956	\$59.60	\$51.45
Utah	544	1,562	77.32	53.60
Vermont	354	3,561	43.40	32.02
Virginia	1,863	7,965	45.70	34.96
Washington . .	1,382	5,142	75.65	58.99
West Virginia .	3,836	4,446	. .	. .
Wisconsin . . .	1,751	12,908	95.33	50.23
Wyoming . . .	115	784	85.26	53.05

education, offers opportunity for a good many teachers, but not so many as one might at first suppose, for there are a great many towns which do not have this grade at all. Probably no line of teaching is more attractive to a young woman who loves children, but hates to discipline, than the kindergarten grade. Little children are always attractive and are easier to handle than when they grow older. But too often the graduate from a kindergarten training school, being unable to secure a kindergarten school, finds she has not the right training for a position as a first grade teacher; so that about the only thing she can do is to go into an ungraded school and get some experience, after which she may develop into a good first or second grade teacher.

But the establishment of what are called vocational schools will be the feature in our educational system which will receive most attention during the next few years. When our high schools and academies were established in the early days of our country, they were designed to prepare boys for college, usually with the expectation that most of them would ultimately study for the ministry; and it was long before educators began to recognize the fact that a college education is not the *Ultima Thule*, and that the province of our schools should be to prepare pupils for better self-support and citizenship rather than to force them to acquire a knowledge of the classics. But the tide has turned. Starting with the large high schools, commercial courses designed for those students who were not planning to go to college were introduced. These fitted for mercantile lines, the study of bookkeeping, stenography, and commercial geography taking the place of Latin and Greek. Then the smaller high schools took up the movement, which has kept on growing until today there is a splendid field for teachers of commercial subjects.

From the establishment of these commercial courses, designed to fit young men and women for employment in offices, the next logical step is to establish schools to fit them for other means of livelihood. Already there are some seventeen such schools in Massachusetts, some of them day schools, but the majority evening schools. Pupils enter these after leaving the grammar schools. The teachers in these

trade schools, besides giving instruction in the English branches, give special training in technical subjects, such training consisting of practical demonstration and bench practice, together with sufficient theory to enable the pupils to become good artisans or mechanics. This field is new. The other states have not begun to enter it yet, but sooner or later they will have to come to it. Here, then, is a new opportunity for teachers, for the vocational schools call for men who can do things and can tell others how to do them. But such men are hard to find, for as they are teachers they should be men of sterling character, with a good command of the English language, with patience and tact to instruct, as well as skill in working with their hands. The fact that such men are scarce means that the salaries will range about \$200 a year more than is paid men in regular high school work; just the same as today commercial teachers command higher salaries than regular high school teachers.

No special mention need be made of teachers of music, drawing, cooking, physical culture, manual training, etc., except to point out the fact that inasmuch as one teacher of any of these special subjects can supervise a good many rooms, it follows that the openings in these lines can never be as numerous as those in regular grade work.

Thus in making a *résumé* of the teaching field we find these significant facts: the number of teachers is increasing, the percentage of men teachers is decreasing, the average salaries are increasing, and new and promising fields of work are about to open up.

CHAPTER II

THE SUCCESSFUL TEACHER

WHAT is a successful teacher? If this question is asked a clergyman, he will tell you one thing; if asked a teachers' agency manager, he will give a different answer; but the difference will be due entirely to the two viewpoints of those interrogated. Both definitions will be right. Just now it is the business side of a teacher's career that we are considering, so it is of this only that we shall speak.

A successful teacher is one who has advanced steadily from less to more responsible positions in a limited number of years until she has reached the maximum salary for teachers of that grade with similar training and teaching experience. This is, of course, a purely mercenary definition, and leaves out of sight the ethical phase of success in teaching, viz., the value of the teacher's influence for good, the awakening of ambition in the minds of her pupils, and the inculcation of higher standards in the community. So great, however, is the value of work along these lines that no teacher, however seemingly unsuccessful from a business standpoint, who has done this in even a small degree should count her work a failure.

But whether viewed from the ethical or business standpoint, success is dependent on the same fundamental principles. In all walks of life love is the

strongest incentive force in successful men and women. It may be the love of gain, of power, of overcoming obstacles, of accumulating wealth for those dear to them, or of making the world better because they have lived in it.

So with the teacher. She must love her work. More than this, she should enjoy it. A moment's thought will show that it is possible to love an occupation because of what it brings, while all the time we dislike the constraints which this same occupation entails. It makes little difference to one who employs an artisan whether he enjoys his work or not. It makes a world of difference to the scholars, however, whether their teacher, despite her high ideals and broader love for her work, enjoys the details of school administration. I would not emphasize this so strongly were there not other callings fully as lucrative as teaching to which a young woman with high ideals may devote her life.

In our definition of a successful teacher we spoke of her as "reaching the maximum salary in a limited number of years." This may seem like putting undue restriction on the definition of success until one realizes how much harder it is to adapt oneself to new conditions as one grows older. So that it is extremely unwise for any teacher after graduating from normal school or college to remain long in a small or out-of-the-way school. It is not so much a matter of salary, for such schools sometimes pay good salaries, but because methods of discipline in small schools vary greatly from those in large schools; so much so, in

fact, that a teacher in changing from one of these small schools to a larger one often fails simply because she does not realize in season that the new situation calls for different methods. In her small school she knew each pupil intimately; in the large school she may be brought in contact with a hundred or more different pupils, only a few of whom come directly under her supervision except at recitation periods. Then, again, the fact that she is willing to stay in the small school, even though the net salary may be more than she would get in the city school, is likely to be construed by a superintendent as evidence of lack of ambition.

It is well, therefore, for every teacher to realize that in approximately five years after graduating from normal school, or eight or ten years after graduating from college, she will be as good a teacher as she is likely ever to be, and consequently that she should then be earning a good salary if she ever expects to have it.

Perhaps the best way of explaining what I mean is to outline the first few years of the teaching career of what might be considered an average teacher.

MEN TEACHERS

NORMAL GRADUATES

First Year	Principal of small grammar school or submaster in larger grammar school. Salary \$600 to \$900.
Second to Third Years	Increase in salary or better school.

Fourth to Tenth
Years Same kind of position. Salary \$800 to \$1,500.

COLLEGE GRADUATES

First Year Principal of small high school or assistant in larger high school. Salary \$600 to \$1,000.

Second to Third
Years Increase in salary or better school.

Fourth to Sixth
Years Better position either as submaster or principal. Salary \$1,000 to \$1,500.

Seventh to Tenth
Years Principalship at salary of from \$1,200 upward.

WOMEN TEACHERS

COLLEGE GRADUATES IN HIGH SCHOOL WORK

First Year Assistant in small high school. Many subjects to teach. Salary \$400 to \$500.

Second Year Increase in salary or better position. Salary \$500 to \$600.

Third to Fifth
Years Larger school. One or two subjects. Salary \$500 to \$700.

Sixth to Tenth
Years Increase in salary or better school. Salary from \$800 to \$1,200, according to ability.

NORMAL OR TRAINING SCHOOL GRADUATES

First Year School of one, two, or three grades. Salary \$400 to \$450.

Second Year Increased salary or better school.

Third to Fourth
Years One grade. Salary \$500 to \$600.

Fifth to Seventh Years	One grade. Salary \$550 to \$700 or more, according to ability.
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TEACHERS WITH ONLY HIGH SCHOOL TRAINING

First Year	Country or district school. From three to eight or ten grades to teach. Weekly wages \$6 to \$8.
Second to Third Years	Same kind of school, with better wages.
Fourth to Fifth Years	Better or larger school of the same kind, wages \$10 to \$12 a week; or graded school, salary \$400 to \$500.
Fifth to Seventh Years	Better graded school at better salary if <i>exceptional ability</i> is shown.

As these outlines are intended merely to be suggestive, there will be found many cases where teachers will be earning good salaries much sooner than is indicated on the above schedule; and there will be other cases where the reverse will be true. Also the fact that salaries in general are increasing means that the figures given will necessarily need revision in a few years; but they are sufficiently accurate at the present time to enable any one to see what the possibilities are in the way of promotion. Whether a teacher ultimately reaches the maximum salary is, however, dependent upon her natural ability and earning capacity.

Having defined and explained what a successful teacher is from a business standpoint, it may be helpful to enumerate from this same standpoint some very common causes of failure to make good in one's first

school. Of course nothing need be said when the failure is due to lack of proper training; but even with adequate training a teacher sometimes fails because she is unable to understand the feelings of the community and to adapt herself to a sphere of life differing from that in which she was brought up. Conditions in country society are often very different from those prevailing in the city; and a girl, coming to a country school and failing to get into the spirit of the place, may unconsciously do many things to engender ill will or jealousy. But when once she has obtained the good will of the little community in which she teaches, she will find the people as worthy of respect as any in her native city.

But lack of ability to discipline is the most potent cause of failure. Modes of discipline differ from those in vogue when our grandmothers taught school. More and more school boards are forbidding corporal punishment, which makes it harder for the teacher in many cases to obtain order. When this power to control without the use of the rod is gained, however, it proves that the teacher is an excellent disciplinarian. But can this power be acquired, and if so, how? I do not wish to pose as an authority on the subject of discipline, nor is this book intended to do more than help teachers in securing positions; but superintendents lay so much stress on the teacher's disciplinary power that I would like to state a few of the causes which, in my judgment, lead to poor discipline, because a little attention on the part of the teacher could easily remove them. The first cause is lack of ventilation in

schoolrooms. No one can do his best work in a room where the air is bad. Time and again, however, I have visited schools where after coming in from the purer air of the street I could hardly breathe because of the closeness of the room. The teacher, however, intent on her work, seemed oblivious to the condition of the atmosphere, and wondered why the little ones were restless. Another cause of restlessness, and hence of poor discipline, is the fact that children cannot stand being kept in one position for any length of time; their muscles get cramped and they feel uncomfortable all over. Let a teacher from time to time open the windows and give the class a few simple physical exercises and discipline will run much smoother. A third cause of uneasiness is often not as apparent, but it is none the less real, namely, the fact that little ones coming to school from a distance, or from poor homes, get hungry. Now when even teachers at conventions find difficulty in listening to the speakers when they feel half starved, how can one expect good order and attention from a child who is faint or hungry? How this matter can be remedied, whether by encouraging the bringing of luncheons by the pupils or the furnishing of same by the teacher, is a matter for the teacher to decide; but if hunger is a cause of undermining discipline, the up-to-date teacher must find some way to remove it.

CHAPTER III

THE EQUIPMENT OF A SUCCESSFUL TEACHER

ANY woman expecting to teach should realize that the moment she applies for a school she becomes as it were a merchant. It is true that what she has to sell: training, experience, personality, etc., are intangible things, but they are none the less real; and as the successful merchant must study his market, choose and arrange his goods to suit the tastes of his customers, so the teacher must use judgment in reference to the kind of training, experience, and personality which she acquires if she would attain the highest measure of success.

In entering any line of business one of the first things is to ascertain the condition of the market. Take a simple illustration from the poultry business. In New York State the preference is for white-shelled eggs, while Bostonians prefer an egg with a brown shell. Therefore the shrewd poultryman would set aside his own personal preferences in catering to his trade and select those breeds which produce eggs popular in his locality. So a young woman, before preparing herself to teach, should ascertain if possible the kind of training which will give her the greatest chance of winning out in the competition she is bound to meet as soon as she enters the field as a candidate for a school.

In a previous chapter we have shown the increasing demand for normal and college trained men and women in the public schools, so we are right in assuming that it will be more and more difficult as time goes on for even a good teacher without normal training to secure the best positions. Already school boards, through efforts brought to bear by the superintendents, are refusing to elect to grade positions new teachers who are not normal or college graduates. Furthermore, there seems to be a growing tendency among superintendents to look for normal graduates who have also had college training.

Right here may be as good a place as any to suggest the possible lines of study which it would be well for one to consider who is planning to become a teacher.

College or University Course.	Fits especially for High School work.
College course followed by one year supplementary work at Normal School.	Gives a college degree and normal certificate, and fits for either High School or Grade work.
Full Normal Course.	Fits for Grade work only.
Course at Training School.	Fits for Grade work, but is not considered as good preparation as a normal course.
Course at Business College.	Fits for teaching Commercial Subjects, but should be preceded by successful teaching experience, or by a college, normal, or training school course; preferably by both experience and college training.

After a woman has begun to teach it is harder and harder for her to go back to normal school, but there are courses which can be taken during the summer at many of the normal schools and colleges. Besides this, certain correspondence schools offer courses which will be found very helpful, although such courses cannot be considered equivalent to resident study at a normal school.¹

At first it may seem that as long as a teacher has the training it makes no difference how she acquires it. For example, suppose a student enters one of our universities, spends four years as a special student, and makes such progress that at the end of this time she acquires even more knowledge than the regular students; if she lacks her college degree she will always be handicapped in getting new positions. Thus a teacher should see to it that her education is not only thorough, but that it does not lack "talking points." Even the school at which one fits for college often has an important bearing on the matter.

But even though a teacher has the best training in the world, but has not a pleasing personality, it will always be hard for her to secure new positions; while, on the other hand, if she has a good personality and makes a good appearance she may be selected in preference to other candidates with better training and more experience. This does not mean that a superintendent selects a teacher merely because of his own preference, but because he realizes what a power for good is a pleasing personality. Children

¹The Home Correspondence School, Springfield, Mass.

instinctively know whether a teacher is a sham, or is at heart in sympathy with them.

A pleasing personality is somewhat like a problem in mathematics which can be solved in several different ways and the same answer obtained. That is, personal beauty, a pleasing voice, intellectual attainments, may each tend to make a personality that is pleasing; but when one studies deeper into the matter one discovers that the keynote of a personality of this kind is adaptability. And if this is true, then any one can attain a personality that is pleasing, although to some it will come much easier than to others, just as some persons can learn mathematics more readily than can others. Any one, however, under the instruction of a good teacher, can learn mathematics, because he will be made to appreciate the relation which numbers, letters, or lines, as the case may be, bear to one another. As soon as this relationship is understood, the subject comes out of the fog and is seen in its true perspective. To illustrate. A freshman in Wellesley once came to me at the close of a term for tutoring in solid geometry. She had finished the term's work and was to be examined after the vacation. At our first lesson I tried to discover where her difficulties lay, so that, starting from something she knew thoroughly, we could build up a structure that would stand the test. After quizzing her for some time imagine my surprise to discover that her failure to understand the subject was all caused by her lack of training in drawing. To her cubes, cones, cylinders, etc., when

drawn on paper, did not seem to stand out as solid things, but appeared merely as so many lines crossing each other. Everything appeared flat. Not until I had given her a lesson on perspective did she learn to see these drawings as solid figures. But once having grasped the idea she had little difficulty in understanding the subject.

So in the matter of acquiring a pleasing personality. It is all in the trick of grasping the true relationship of things. Some persons may do this more readily than others, may do it instinctively, just as some persons naturally take to mathematics; but once a person can see things from the standpoint of some particular person he can, if he chooses, acquire a personality which will be pleasing to that person. And if he can do this in one case, he can do it in others; for all he has to do is to extend his field of vision and see things from the standpoints of many other persons and adapt himself accordingly. No teacher who is earnest and uses her God-given powers of common sense and good judgment need lack in attaining a pleasing personality. There is positively no question about this. Of course it requires thought, patience, and will power; but any one lacking any of these qualities is certainly not fitted by temperament for the profession of teaching. We are separate and distinct individuals, and as such we naturally differ one from the other. To improve our personality does not mean to change our individuality, but merely to modify the expression of this individuality so that it will not jar upon the individuality of others.

To do this we not only must feel a kindly consideration for others, but its expression must take a form which cannot be misunderstood. The act and the thought which prompts the act must be in harmony. Take a simple example: Two persons attempt to entertain a gathering of friends by playing a selection upon the cornet. One is without training, the other is a skilled musician. The instrument is in each case the same, but what a difference in the tone and how different the effect on the listeners! Where is the trouble? Not with the instrument; surely not with the purpose of the players. So in the attainment of a pleasing personality; not only should one have kind intentions, earnestness, and enthusiasm, but one should learn to express these in a way that will be pleasing. Fortunate indeed is the teacher who has a friend willing to help her along this line.

Closely allied to personality is the matter of dress. Sometimes, indeed, it carries more weight even than training and experience. It is such a power for good or harm in determining the decision of superintendents that no teacher can afford to neglect this part of her equipment. All that is needed is a little time, thought, and attention to details and artistic effects. Why any one should wear an unbecoming hat, tie, or garment when the same money would purchase an attractive article is a question which has only one answer. Improvement in dress means a gain in power, for, as one writer has aptly expressed it, "Next to the hope of heaven is the feeling that one is well dressed." There are today teachers who would be earning from

\$50 to \$400 a year more if they would give this matter the attention it deserves. Many times I have seen an untidy dress or a pair of soiled or ripped gloves prejudice a candidate in the mind of the interviewing superintendent. Some persons, too, have slight physical defects which certain styles of dress intensify, while others conceal or modify. A striking illustration of this occurred in the case of a bright young college graduate who was trying for her first school. This young lady was afflicted with a slight nervous tremor. It did not, however, prevent her from taking her college course and graduating with honors. She realized, however, that it handicapped her in applying for schools, yet she wished to teach and decided to try for positions. I recall well the morning she had her first interview with a superintendent at our office, for at the close of the interview he called me aside and suggested that I advise her in the future to remove her hat when she met superintendents. It seems that she wore a hat trimmed with cherries, and the slight tremor caused these ornaments to vibrate upon their elastic stems with a rhythmic motion which resulted in so hypnotizing the superintendent that he could not remove his gaze from the hat, nor could he fix his attention on what she was saying, so persistently did the little round balls bob themselves into his consciousness.

In the equipment of a teacher we have thus far spoken of training, personality, and appearance, but have said nothing about experience, nor shall we need to say much about this, for it is something which

time and opportunity will give. It remains, however, for the teacher to obtain a school where her experience will prove most valuable to her as a stepping-stone to better positions. This matter of location is very important, but quite often it is made subservient to the question of salary. It is the position and not the weekly wage that should be the main object, for the wage will ultimately take care of itself. Obviously, when a teacher spends several years in a school small in numbers, not under good supervision, and in such an out of the way place that she cannot easily be visited, she cannot expect her work and ability to bring her as many opportunities as if she taught in a school under trained supervisors and easy of access to visiting superintendents. More and more superintendents demand to see teachers at their work, but it is extremely hard to get a superintendent to visit a teacher located in some remote town when there are other candidates in schools easily accessible.

Another important item in the equipment of a teacher is confidence in her own ability. Too often a candidate for a position feels afraid of her rivals. There is really no need to fear any superintendent, and as for rivals, it is quite likely they feel equally afraid. To think of your own inefficiency is all wrong. Convince yourself that you are equal to the situation; say to yourself, "I can and I will succeed." Other people accept us largely on our own valuation. Set this valuation high and then live up to it. Nothing succeeds like success, and a part of success is to feel that you will succeed. A great deal is made now of

the power of auto-suggestion, and no one needs this more than the woman who is candidating for a school. If you do not believe this is true, try it, and you will see how much stronger an impression you will make when you go to an interview if you are convinced that you are *the* one and the *only* one for the position.

And last, but not by any means least, a teacher needs health. She needs it even more than she needs knowledge. I mean by this that no matter how well trained a teacher may be, if she lacks health she is inferior to a healthy teacher with less training. For this reason she should be careful to take sufficient exercise and recreation, and above all she should shun Worry, which, like that old enemy to success, Procrastination, has wrecked so many bright prospects. Tennis, golf, tramping, skating, and social entertainment will sweep with the magic of the old woman's broom the "cobwebs" from the brain, and make life once more worth the living.

Before closing this chapter I want earnestly to warn teachers against resigning before they secure other positions, as to do so almost always has the effect of impairing the value of their equipment. Just as soon as one resigns one's position it becomes much harder to get another. This is true in all lines of business. The moment a person is unemployed, explanations have to be made. Superintendents want to know why a teacher gave up her school, and if this was done before she received her reëlection there is always the possibility of doubt arising as to whether she would have been reëlected had she remained. But

if, on the other hand, she receives her reappointment, it is *prima facie* evidence that she gave satisfaction. Besides this, the fact that a teacher is without a position creates a feeling of insecurity which has the effect of diminishing her own confidence. But if she does not resign until she gets a better position she will not be forced to take a school no better than the one in which she is then teaching, nor be placed in a situation where the superintendent can expect to get her at the minimum price because she is out of work.

CHAPTER IV

HOW TO MAKE SUCCESSFUL PERSONAL OR WRITTEN APPLICATIONS

“ASK and it shall be given you.” No truer words were ever spoken. Except in rare instances, in order to secure a school an application must be made to the proper school authorities. Whether this is made by letter, or through a third person, or by the personal application of the candidate herself, its object is the same, viz., to make such a favorable impression upon the minds of the superintendent and school board as to secure the election. Whichever way the application is made does not affect the number of rival candidates for the position. If the place is a good one, there will be enough competition to satisfy the fighting instincts of any rational being. It is necessary, therefore, for the teacher to marshal and arrange her forces with the strategy of a general on the field of battle; training, experience, personality, and appearance, each must be made to act its respective part most effectively. Unexpected complications may arise which tact can turn to advantage; want of tact will render success impossible.

One of the most striking examples of a display of tact in applying for a school happened several years ago when the writer was connected with a prominent teachers' agency. The call came for a teacher of a special high school subject. It stated

that an experienced teacher was required. Our best candidate was a young woman just graduated from college, thoroughly conversant with the subject, but entirely lacking in teaching experience. Two things, however, made me decide to present her as a candidate: her training and the fact that all her references spoke of her as possessing great tact. Accordingly I wrote and informed her of the opening, cautioning her on no account to make her application by letter, for if she did it would surely be turned down, but to make a personal call upon the superintendent. Then I waited results with considerable solicitude, for it was taking a long chance. But I soon discovered that I had no need for worry, for her references had spoken the truth when they said she possessed great tact. Contrary to my instructions she wrote the superintendent that she was coming to see him to make a personal application for the position; but she took care to mail the letter so that it could by no possibility reach him before she would be on her way to the town where he lived. She dressed herself in a becoming outing suit, and when she reached his office she entered it with the determination to get the place. On account of her letter the superintendent expected her, but he tried to scare her by stating that the position required an experienced teacher, that all the other teachers in the school were experienced, that he had already had some fifty applicants for the place who were experienced teachers. But it didn't work. She wouldn't be scared. She felt that she knew her subject and had confidence that she

could teach it. Every reason which the superintendent advanced to prove to her that she was not fitted for the place she used in such a way as to show that that was one of the very reasons why she could make good. For instance, when the statement was made that the teacher of that subject had been a particularly strong one, she said that this made it all the better for her, for the work was all planned out and all she would have to do would be to follow in the same path. Thus, in one way or another, she turned every objection to her own advantage, and she did it in such a tactful way that she finally impressed the superintendent so favorably that he allowed her to call upon the different members of the school board. But even after she had done this and made them feel that she was a bright young woman and would make a good teacher, it still seemed as though she would not win out. However, to make a long story short, the position was finally offered her, although there were some seventy-five teachers in the race before it was settled.

In the instance given above the teacher won out because she convinced the committee that she was equal to the situation, that she possessed ability, that she would be equal to any emergency that was likely to come up. In other words she impressed them with her power. And in every case it is this impression of power which a candidate should aim to give. It makes no difference whether she meets superintendents at the instigation of some agency or through her own initiative. At the interview she should by manner, words, and credentials convince them of her ability.

Before suggesting how a teacher can give this impression of power, it is well to call attention to the fact that power is of at least two kinds: the power which comes with physique and health, and that other kind of power which is so hard to define but which is the result of confidence in one's own ability. One teacher may say, "John, if you do that again I shall punish you." But in a few days John may be caught doing the forbidden thing again. Whether he receives the punishment or not is immaterial. The warning was not heeded. Another teacher may say, "John, I would not do that again." The tone in which the words are spoken may be low, but there is something in the eye of the second teacher which commands respect, and the offense is not repeated.

Undoubtedly *avoirdufois* is a tremendous asset. The large policeman's order to "move on" is more willingly obeyed than that of his less ponderous comrade in service. But it is, after all, that other kind of power which makes the strongest impression; the power whose existence is impressed on the superintendent by inference and suggestion rather than by direct statement. It is the power that comes from enthusiasm, from a feeling of having ability, of realizing that other teachers with the same or less training have won out under similar conditions. Above all, it is not wise to be too anxious for a position; or rather it is never wise to let a superintendent feel that you are afraid of not being elected.

Being careful to come to an interview fresh rather than tired, to come equipped with letters of recom-

mendation, to be dressed appropriately and becomingly, and above all to come without hesitation and fear, are precautions based on simple common sense.

One other suggestion. Meet appointments on time. If the interview is at an agency it is well to bring some interesting book to read, for the chances are that the superintendent will be late. To sit about doing nothing is more fatiguing than to work. So come prepared with something interesting to do. It may be all right for a superintendent to be two hours late, but the teacher should always be on time; and if, for any reason, she is delayed or thinks she may be delayed, she should, if possible, telephone stating this fact. It's the little things that count. Don't neglect these little things.

So much for the personal application; a word now about applications by letter.

A good rule in writing such letters is to have clearly in mind the facts that you would want a candidate to state in her letter of application if you were the superintendent; then word your letter, not so that it will be odd, but, at the same time, so that it will stand out above *all* the other letters that the superintendent receives. Speak of your training, your experience, and if you are athletic, or took special gymnastic work in school or college, mention the fact. If you are never sick you might mention this fact. But do not make the letter too long. One sheet should be enough. Then, too, if there are misspelled words or mistakes in grammar it is obvious that the candidate cannot be classed among

those qualified to fill the requirements of a teacher's position.

With the first letter to a superintendent it is well to inclose a small photograph. A copy in miniature of one of your best photographs can be struck off at a trifling expense, or a kodak picture can be used if it is a good one; a poor photograph is worse than none. Select one which gives the impression of alertness, power, snap. A good way is to fasten the unmounted photograph to the letter by a clip or by a drop of mucilage, so that as the letter is read by the recipient he is, as it were, in conversation with the writer. Of course the first page of a letter is the best one to use for this purpose.

It is indeed an art to write a good letter, but it is something worth acquiring, and in the business world a person who can write letters that win can command a large salary. It is needless to suggest that it is customary to inclose a self-addressed envelope, properly stamped, although in many cases even this will not bring an answer. When it is remembered that a letter is but a means of impressing the personality of the writer on the mind of the superintendent or chairman of the board, it will be needless to caution the candidate to use judgment in the composition of her letters. Even the kind of paper used helps to fix the impression of culture or rusticity. Care should be taken to have the penmanship legible. If the teacher is fortunate or unfortunate enough to own a typewriter, she should not only learn how to use it so as to turn out a good-looking letter, but she

should see to it that the machine itself is in comparatively good alignment.

In the commercial world it is a mark of a good salesman never to leave a prospect so that he cannot call again. He may not sell any goods at the first visit, but he should never accept a "no" as final. He should be sure to leave the latchstring out so that he can call at some future time if it should seem advisable to do so. There is always a possibility of a letter going astray, so that in case a reply is not received within a reasonable time, as is more than likely to be the case, there is ample excuse for writing a second letter. But in writing any letter, with a little care it can be so worded as to make another letter possible without giving offense.

There is an interesting little game which is sometimes played with children with the aim of making them self-reliant. It is called *Supposing*, and is played as follows. A situation calling for immediate action is described, and the child is asked what he would do. For example, this description is given. "Suppose sometime when you are alone in the house you heard a great noise like running water, and when you went up to the bathroom you found that some one had turned on the water and forgot to turn it off and it was running over the sides of the tub, and when you went to shut it off the faucet should break. What would you do?" It is a simple little game, but one that makes a person think and helps prepare him for emergencies. Well, let us try this same game now. Let us suppose that we are superintendents and the

mail brings us the following bunch of letters from teachers who want to be considered candidates for positions in our schools. Question, which applicants will stand the best chance of receiving favorable consideration, and why? In giving these letters, all proper names have been omitted, because they are real letters, written to real superintendents by real teachers who wanted positions.

DEAR SIR:

I should like to put my name among your candidates for vacancies this coming Fall. I have had two years' experience, and at present I am teaching grades 7, 8, and 9 here, where I have been since the beginning of the school year. I am a graduate of the — English High School, and took a special course in English at college. I also took a course in English at the Harvard Summer School. I make English a specialty and prefer the higher grades to the lower.

My references are as follows: Names and addresses of three persons follow. If you care to see me I shall be in Boston on Saturday, June 1 and could go to — if you wished to see me there.

Respectfully yours,

_____.

MY DEAR SIR:—

If you have vacancies on your list of teachers for the coming year, will you please consider me an applicant?

Have graduated from high school and normal school and taught in ungraded school one year and third grade two years.

As to my success refer to — or come and visit my school.

Yours respectfully,

_____.

DEAR SIR:—

As I wish to apply for a position as teacher in the — High School, I am sending in convenient form, a statement of my qualifications for that position. I have had such splendid success in an unusually hard position that I wish to urge you very earnestly to write to my references, even if you have no vacancy just now. Since I am very sure that you would like my personal appearance I shall be very glad to visit you at your request. I am very anxious to secure a position in a high school of admitted excellence near — and accordingly I should regard it as a favor, if you would even look into my claims for consideration. Hoping you will be so kind as to answer my letter, I am,

Respectfully yours,

_____.

Accompanying this letter is a neat, typewritten sheet giving the applicant's training, experience, specialties, success in discipline, personal data, and references. The letter itself is written by hand, as are all the other letters.

DEAR MR. —

I have just learned that there is a probability of a vacancy in the mathematics department of the — High School, and if such is the case I should like to be considered a candidate for the position. I am twenty-six years old, a graduate of the — Classical High School, and of — College, *magna cum laude*.

Mathematics is one of the subjects in which I specialized in college and which I have most enjoyed teaching. I have had about three year's experience in public school teaching. I enclose a copy of a letter from the first principal under whom I taught, and for

further information in regard to my work I refer you to (three references follow) where I am now teaching.

I shall be very glad to go to — for a personal interview if you will be good enough to give me an opportunity any time after Tuesday noon, —.

Respectfully yours,

_____.

DEAR SIR:—

I have just graduated from — College this June and am looking for a position as a high school teacher. Will you please tell me if there are any vacant positions in your high school?

Yours truly,

_____.

DEAR SIR:—

Am attending — University and would like a position as teacher in one of your evening schools. Am a graduate of — High School and have taught four years in the elementary grades of that town. Can give you references. Hoping to hear from you soon, I remain,

Yours sincerely,

_____.

DEAR SIR:—

I have heard of a vacancy in the third grade of the — — School, and I would appreciate your considering me an applicant.

I am twenty-one years old and am of English descent. I am a regular attendant, although not a member of the Congregational Church.

I was graduated from the — High School in — and attended — College —. Besides academic work I have had training in vocal, piano and violin.

Last year I taught the first four grades (primary) in — — and since September — I have been teaching in the — Grammar School, grades five and six.

For testimonials I can refer you to the following gentlemen: (Four references). I have no testimonials in my possession at present but will write to the above mentioned if you can wait.

Yours respectfully,

As a teacher will write practically the same thing each time she makes an application, it will pay her to compose a "model letter" which can be modified to suit special cases. After composing such a letter it is a good plan to lay it aside for a few days and then to submit it to careful criticism and revision. In this way incongruities may be discovered and corrected. If the teachers who wrote the letters from which the following extracts have been taken had done this, their applications would have been pruned of some of their humorous foliage.

I am unmarried, but would readily marry if you so advised before coming on.

I can read and speak Spanish, French, German, Latin, Greek, English, and five Indian languages. I have lived among twenty tribes of Indians. I am a natural musician and perform upon quite a number of musical instruments. I am a Christian and a Moralist. I am a strong believer in sound morals. . . . I shall remain in anticipating suspense until you reply to me.

I shall send you my photograph in the course of a few weeks. Three months of camp life has lessened my weight considerable, so I will wait a month before having my likeness taken. My personal appearance is fair I am rather short, 5 ft. 5 in., Chest measure 38, hat band $7\frac{1}{4}$ inches. I have an iron constitution and live a strictly temperate life.

I am perfectly willing and qualified to teach anything but principally scientific subjects.

And Oblige,

Yours truly,

_____.

CHAPTER V

HOW TO SECURE A SCHOOL WITHOUT THE HELP OF AN AGENCY

THIS subject will appeal especially to those persons who feel that teachers' agencies are robbers, that no position is worth five per cent of a year's salary, that all an agency really does is to send the teacher a notice that a vacancy exists, and, well, you know how some teachers feel about it. Neither am I going to try to disabuse any one of this opinion, for the old saying, "A woman convinced against her will is of the same opinion still," is as true today as ever it was.

In another chapter we shall speak of agencies and the work they are doing, but in this we shall describe how to go to work to get a position by one's own efforts.

Teachers' agencies, of course, get hold of most of the good vacancies and present their candidates for the positions, but it does not necessarily follow that they learn of all of the openings, nor that a teacher cannot secure a school without their help. Occasionally, too, there are school officials who do not like to deal with agencies, although such cases are becoming less and less frequent.

Positions which may be applied for without the help of a teachers' agency may be divided into two classes: present and future vacancies. The first should

be applied for in the same way as if the opening was learned through an agency notification. That is, the teacher should immediately make an application in person or by letter, preferably the former. But as in this case she has not the help of the agency in sending copies of her papers to the superintendent, it is more necessary for her to send copies of recommendations that have been given her, or better yet will it be if she can get her superintendent to write a letter to the other superintendent in her behalf. Superintendents are often quite glad to do this, only they don't like to do it too often.

The other class of vacancies, those which are likely to occur, may be applied for as follows: First, she should decide in her own mind the places in which she would like to teach; then she should write a letter to the different superintendents outlining her training and teaching experience. Before doing this, however, it would be well to ascertain the rules and requirements of the respective school boards; that is, the training and experience necessary to make a teacher eligible for a position in that town or city. Some places, such as Malden, Massachusetts, do not elect any teacher to the grades who is not a normal or college graduate, while other cities equally good require a certain amount of experience, but do not nominally insist upon normal training. I say nominally, for even in these places normal trained teachers receive the preference, and the percentage of untrained teachers is becoming less and less every year.

If the letters of application sent out in this way

show gross ignorance and unfitness on the part of their authors, they will undoubtedly be consigned to the waste basket unless they happen to be humorous from a pedagogical standpoint. But if they are good, or fairly good, letters the chances are they will be preserved, that is, put away in some box or file. Some school committees have special application blanks for teachers to fill out who wish to apply for positions in their schools, and when a teacher writes to a superintendent asking to be considered as a candidate one of these blanks is sent her.

Now just here is where many teachers deceive themselves. They imagine because they have been asked to fill out a blank that the superintendent will keep them in mind when such an opening as they are fitted to fill occurs. So when they have once filed their application they think the work is all done.

Well, what would you do if you were a superintendent and a hundred teachers applied to you for positions this year and each one filled out a blank, and next year a hundred more good teachers, and so on? Question, would *you* consult last year's list? And why not? Simply because you would know that a large number of last year's applicants would not then be teaching in the same schools in which they were when they made the application. That is, when the application is received it makes an impression on the superintendent, and if he has a vacancy at that particular time for which the teacher seems to be a good candidate there is a possibility of her "arrow shot at a venture" hitting the mark. But if the application

does not happen to arrive at such an opportune moment and it is consigned to the cabinet, where it associates with the dead or stagnant applications of innumerable other teachers, its fate is not likely to be very different from theirs.

But can nothing be done to remedy this sad state of affairs? Certainly. Let the teacher *keep* herself in the mind of the superintendent until she is either elected or permanently turned down. One way is to keep him informed of her school program whenever it is changed; to notify him when there is a change in the train service, when the vacations come, and when the school is closed by reason of sickness in the community. In short, assume that he is interested to visit your school *sometime*, and make it easy for him to do this by furnishing him with the necessary data regarding your schedule, ways to reach the school, etc. Then, too, if one is planning to take a course at a summer school of any kind, this data should be added to that already given on the application blank, and as this blank is in the hands of the superintendent the only way is to write a letter telling him of the proposed course.

Another way is for the teacher to make personal calls upon the superintendents. There is no reason for hesitating to do this, as every superintendent expects vacancies to occur and is always glad to learn of good teachers. Most superintendents have special office hours when these calls can be made.

But the most practical way for a grade teacher whose spring vacation comes at a time when other

schools are in session is to go to a town or city superintendent and acquaint him of the fact that she will be glad to substitute until her own school opens if he should need her. If he gives her the chance to teach in this way, she has the finest opportunity in the world to show what she can do, and to establish a reputation with the principal so that when a vacancy occurs in that school she stands a fine chance of having it offered to her if she made good. There are always openings along this line, for the duties of a teacher in our city schools are so arduous that as spring approaches many of them are so tired that they give out, and substitutes are put in for a longer or shorter time. Agencies find great difficulty in furnishing substitutes at short notice, so that any teacher who is on hand is likely to get the work; and even though it may not result in her being offered a position in that particular school or town, the superintendent or principal may be very glad to help her with other superintendents by allowing her to refer to him when applying for other schools. Help of this kind is always very valuable, as superintendents and principals are in the habit of suggesting good teachers to one another when they meet at superintendents' meetings and conventions. By this way of being "Johnny on the spot" many a teacher has worked her way into a good position, to the amazement of agency managers.

It is the custom in some places to give a teacher who has a large room an assistant, and in many cases the assistant is inexperienced, or with but very little

experience. The salary paid is so small that it hardly pays an agency to bother much about such a place, but a position of this kind offers a fine opportunity for an ambitious teacher, for if she makes good she will be offered a school of her own, which means increasing salary until the maximum is reached. It may, indeed, be hard to work for \$1.50 a day, but it may be wise to do this for a year if it means a good position the second year.

In trying to get a position without the help of an agency a teacher should use every means to extend her acquaintanceship among other teachers and superintendents. This can be done at conventions and summer schools and in other ways. Such acquaintanceship is especially valuable, as principals and superintendents are usually very willing to consider candidates who are recommended by teachers whom they trust. Oftentimes teachers know of vacancies not only in their own school or town, but in other schools and towns, even before the superintendents, and they are frequently willing to help their friends by informing them of openings. In this way the candidate's letter to the superintendent may come at an opportune time and be most effective.

Then, too, if a teacher carefully reads the daily papers with a view to discovering openings she will learn of resignations from time to time which she can follow up. Of course a great many vacancies are filled before the resignations are reported in the papers, but in many cases the reverse is true.

In short, if a teacher uses the same enterprise and

perseverance which the agencies use and does not "wear out her welcome" by trying for places which neither nature, training, nor experience fit her, she can undoubtedly secure a school without the help of any agency. But whether she can get it soon enough by her own unaided efforts to offset the loss in increased salary which a better school pays while she is doing this is another matter. There is such a thing as being "penny wise and pound foolish."

CHAPTER VI

HOW TEACHERS' AGENCIES HELP THEIR MEMBERS

IN the preceding chapter we have shown how a teacher can go to work to secure a position by her own efforts. We shall now show how an agency can help a teacher secure a position, after which we shall leave it to the good sense of each teacher to decide for herself whether she shall make use of the help of the agencies or rely wholly on her own efforts.

To show some of the ways in which an agency can help its registrants, let me cite a few typical cases the truth of which I can vouch for, as most of them came under my personal observation.

A teacher enrolled at one of the well-known agencies. She was a woman of good personality, good training and experience. She wanted a better position, and several principals and superintendents were induced to visit her school. All seemed favorably impressed with her work, but none of them offered her a position. She could not understand the reason for this sudden change of opinion, and came to the manager of the agency for advice.

It happened that the principal of the school where she was teaching made a remark in this agency to the effect that he would never help any of his good teachers to get a position. This was the key to the situation. The manager asked the teacher if she had

referred the visiting principals and superintendents to her own principal, and she answered in the affirmative. She was then advised not to do this again; and also the next time a superintendent was sent to visit her he was "put wise" to the attitude of her principal, with the result that she was immediately offered a good position.

A case which shows a different phase of agency work is that of a young woman who was fitting herself for teaching by taking post-graduate work at a well-known university. She was doing some practice teaching when a call was received for which she seemed a very suitable candidate. The superintendent was to meet teachers in Boston, and she was selected as a candidate for the position and was duly notified. She replied that she had school work which she did not want to lose, and so declined to meet the appointment. As it happened that the superintendent came from a distance and was to be in the city all day, we succeeded in arranging for another appointment for the afternoon.

Then we called her up by telephone and impressed upon her the extreme importance of coming to Boston and applying for the position, even going so far as to offer to pay part of her expenses if she should prove unsuccessful in securing the position. She finally consented to come to Boston, where she met the superintendent and was elected to the position. Afterwards she realized that besides the commission she owed the agency a debt of gratitude for not allowing her to throw away a splendid opportunity.

Still another example is that of a teacher who applied for a position in a neighboring state. Copies of her papers were forwarded by the agency, and after examining them the committee invited her to meet them at their expense, as it was inconvenient for them to come to Boston. This she did, and at the close of the interview was offered the school. She did not want to accept on the spot, for she was also trying to secure a position in a school near Boston which she was exceedingly anxious to get, as she was a Boston girl. She fully expected to learn the decision of the superintendent in regard to the Boston position before the time set for her answer to the out of town school board, but upon her return home she discovered that complications had arisen which postponed their decision. She was in a quandary what to do, and at our suggestion wrote the committee asking them to allow her to defer her decision a little longer. This so riled the chairman of the board that he wrote us a letter in which he said he would not take her under any consideration. As she was a woman of fine sensibilities I did not dare to tell her about receiving this letter, for I realized if she knew about it she would never go there; so I evaded her questions and hoped for the best. In the meantime, however, the Boston position was decided adversely to her interests. A few days later I was called up on the long distance 'phone by the chairman in regard to other candidates for the position. Again I called his attention to this teacher's peculiar fitness for the place, confessed frankly that I had not told her the contents of his letter, and in-

formed him that she was still available. This smoothed the matter out, the committee was glad that I acted as I did, she accepted the place, and when I visited the town a year or so later they were most enthusiastic about her. She never knew how near she came to losing the school.

During one of his "hunting trips" the representative of an agency discovered a grade teacher of exceptional disciplinary and teaching ability. She was then drawing a salary of \$500 a year. Her name was presented to a superintendent where very much higher salaries were paid, and he was urged to visit her school and see her work. This he agreed to do. But after several weeks had elapsed it was found that he had not visited her nor sent any of his principals. Her case was again brought to his attention, and once more he was urged to visit her school. But not until a third call had been made upon him did the agency succeed in getting him to make the desired visitation. And the funny part of the incident is that this teacher thought the agency was making too much money out of getting her the position, although in her new school, after paying her commission, she still had over a hundred dollars extra salary, while the cost of living remained practically the same.

One other illustration. A personal friend of the writer, now a very successful grammar master, several years ago made application for a position, but failed of election. So strong an impression, however, did he make upon the committee that they kept him in mind. So when in the course of time the position

again became vacant they recalled the favorable impression he had made upon them, and telephoned the agency through which his application had been made to ascertain where he was then teaching, and to have him meet the committee if he would like to consider the opening again. This was a number of years ago. He still holds this position.

Incidents like these can be told *ad infinitum*, but these are sufficient to show that there are things an agency can do for a candidate which she cannot do for herself. The fact that college deans and presidents, principals of normal schools, superintendents of schools, and successful teachers indorse the agencies is conclusive proof not only that they have come to stay, but that they are of real assistance to teachers, and therefore no teacher can afford to do without their help if she would attain the fullest measure of success of which she is capable.

Of course there are poor agencies as well as good ones, just as there are bad and good teachers; but the real reason why some teachers fail to get the desired help is because they do not do their part, but expect the agency to do it all, even, as it were, to the making of "bricks without straw." If no replies to letters are received from the registrant, if she persistently refuses to apply for places which come within her capacity, if she places such restrictions on the kind of place she is willing to consider as to make it impossible to find such a place, if she habitually enters the agency with a sour face and a "Well, I don't suppose you have anything for *me* today," if

she feels aggrieved at the agency because her lack of training or experience debars her from teaching in certain places, is it any wonder she can truthfully say, "The agencies never helped me"? But if she is appreciative of what the manager is trying to do for her, if she realizes that he does not make the rules and regulations of the various school boards, that he is not responsible for the personal preferences of superintendents, that he is as put out as she is when a superintendent does not keep his appointment, or do as he promises, there will be little reason to complain of her treatment at any of the good agencies, and she will find the advice and help of the manager of great value to her, even though he sometimes may seem exacting and arbitrary.

CHAPTER VII

HOW TO GET THE BEST RESULTS FROM MEMBERSHIP IN A TEACHERS' AGENCY

HAVING thus "exposed" some of the inside facts about agency work and methods, it now remains to give a few suggestions in regard to how a teacher should go to work to get the best results from her membership in a teachers' agency. And in doing this let us start at the very beginning and suppose an ordinary, every-day case. Miss Brown we shall assume to be a teacher in a country school who wishes to secure a better position. She writes to one or more of the many teachers' agencies which she has heard recommended, or whose advertisements she sees in the school journal which she takes for their so-called "manuals." In a few days she receives this literature, and with it comes an application or enrollment blank. This document states the condition of the contract, worded variously by different agencies, but amounting essentially to the same thing, viz., that if, through the help of the agency, Miss Brown is elected within a specified time as a regular teacher, she agrees to pay said agency a sum equal to five per cent of her first year's salary. If it is the case of a substitute position, the percentage is usually somewhat larger, but is based only upon the salary she receives for the actual time she teaches. Further particulars are given

as to the adjustment of this commission should the position she takes as a substitute teacher become a permanent one, and explanation is made in more or less detail as to what is meant by securing a position through the help of the agency.

Now perhaps it is the first time that Miss Brown has had dealings with an agency, and consequently she does not realize that superintendents frequently ask to see the registration forms as well as the reports of the references, and so she will quite likely begin to fill out the blank without first reading it over. The result will probably be that she will make some mistakes, so that when she is through the blank will look anything but neat. This is no exaggeration. Again and again I have seen registration blanks come back soiled, blotted, or otherwise showing carelessness on the part of the registrants.

Discretion, too, is needed in answering the different questions. For instance, blanks of some agencies ask the teacher to state the lowest salary she will accept. In view of the fact above stated that superintendents see these registration blanks, it is unwise for any teacher to state the lowest sum she will accept, for human nature is such that superintendents sometimes take advantage of this information in fixing the salary. A better way, however, is not to leave this space blank for some one else to fill in, but to answer the question by a dash. It is all right to confide in the manager as to the salary one would be willing to accept under certain conditions, but the information should not be made public. And right here I

might add that an experienced manager is in most cases a better judge of a teacher's earning power than are her friends and relatives.

Somewhere on every blank will be found spaces for names of references. Teachers sometimes think it is necessary to ask permission before they give the name of a reference, but this is not so if the references are school officials. The references should be the names of persons who know about her school work and educational training, that is, superintendents, principals, fellow-teachers, professors, and teachers. In regard to references I may be pardoned if I make one suggestion: do not give the name of your clergyman unless he is intimately connected with the school. And even then do so with caution. The effect of a man's business upon his habits of thought are recognized by psychologists, and a good pastor dealing with men of varied temperaments, whose troubles have to be smoothed out without involving himself in any way, can write an ideal recommendation of a teacher, and at the end of it put in a sentence or two which relieves him of all responsibility for what he has said and shows he really knows nothing at all about her school work.

As the agencies always inclose return envelopes when sending out these "letters of inquiry," most of the references respond immediately, and in the majority of cases the replies about any special registrant will be fairly uniform. Occasionally, however, it happens that the replies of two references will express opinions diametrically opposed. For instance,

one reference may speak in the highest terms of a teacher; another, to use a slang phrase, declares that she is N. G. When such conflicting reports are received the agency feels certain that spite of some kind exists between certain members of the board, and that the one making the adverse criticism has personal reasons for doing so. It may be he has a daughter who wanted the school, or a son whose attentions were obnoxious to the teacher. Agency managers are so experienced in reading "between the lines" that reports of this kind do not prejudice them against a teacher. Furthermore, these discreet and "unfriendly" papers have a faculty of becoming "mislaidd."

But to return to Miss Brown, who has filled out and returned her application for membership in the agency, with the customary registration fee. In the course of time the receipt of this will be acknowledged; letters of inquiry will be sent to the references for particulars about Miss Brown, and when these are received they will be placed on file according to the system used in that particular agency. To keep all the papers of the different members straight entails an immense amount of care on the part of the agency force. As Miss Brown's references are received they are carefully studied, and in this way the manager forms his judgment of her ability and decides to what kind of schools he can recommend her with a possibility of her being elected. Of course no man's judgment is correct in every case, but one who has handled papers of hundreds of registrants

learns to form accurate estimates of a teacher's ability, and the candid advice of a manager should be carefully weighed before exception is taken to it. His close study of schools and school conditions enables him to tell in many cases to a surety whether a teacher who has been successful in one school can be successful in another school. Principals of schools and committees have their own peculiarities as well as teachers, a fact teachers often lose sight of. Many a young teacher has made a failure in a position, not because she was a poor teacher, but because she accepted a school where conditions were against her from the start.

The filling out of the registration blank and payment of the membership fee by Miss Brown, the sending out of letters of inquiry to Miss Brown's references, and the proper filing of application blank and replies of references by the agency constitute what might be called Act I in the drama of getting a school. The second act is as follows. When a superintendent finds that one of his teachers has resigned, unless he already has another teacher in mind for the place, he immediately notifies some of the agencies of the vacancy and describes the kind of teacher he wants. And the agency manager at once consults his records and selects what he considers to be the most desirable candidates for the place. Sometimes the restrictions imposed by the superintendent are so unusual that it is extremely hard to find a teacher meeting all the requirements. For this reason it is very important for a registrant to be specific in her statements as

regards her training, experience, and what she is qualified to teach. Also it is important for her to keep her agency informed of every change in her address, as a mistake in sending the notice of a vacancy may cause just enough delay to mean a loss of opportunity.

Having made a selection of candidates, the agency notifies these teachers, sending them such particulars about the position as will enable them to decide whether or not they wish to try for the place. The form of notice varies with different agencies, but every agency expects a reply from each notice it sends a registrant; and if a teacher is to avoid complications resulting from belonging to more than one agency, or of trying for positions on her own initiative as well as through her agency, she needs to be particular to answer all agency communications immediately upon their receipt. In declining to become a candidate for a position it is often of help to the manager to have the registrant state her reason, but in doing so care should be taken not to give the impression that one is hard to please.

In deciding what places to apply for, Miss Brown should not be too critical, nor should she conclude that because she is not up in every subject which a special position calls for she stands no chance of getting the school. A superintendent or principal can frequently change the apportionment of subjects which one teaches if he feels that it is for the good of the school to do so. But no teacher should make a strong application for a place which she does not intend to accept in order to get her own school board

to increase her salary, unless she is willing to pay a commission on the salary she would receive if she accepted it, provided the offering of it to her brings about the desired increase in her salary in the school in which she is then teaching. Some teachers do not realize this.

One other thing which may prove of help to Miss Brown is to inform the agency manager in regard to replies, or lack of replies, which she receives from superintendents to whom she wrote in response to notices from the agency. In this way he can often advise her what further steps to take, or can coöperate with her by again writing the superintendent in her behalf. In short, Miss Brown should keep in close touch with her agency until she secures a school which she accepts.

Human nature is the same everywhere. As children we plant a seed, and in a few days dig it up to see if it is growing. As adults we want dividends from our investments at once. Therefore, as soon as Miss Brown joins an agency she naturally wants to receive notices of a great many vacancies, and is inclined to feel that an agency which sends her only an occasional notice is not keeping her in mind as it should, when the reverse may be the case. Undoubtedly some agencies get hold of a greater number of vacancies than do others, but there is a marked difference in the number of notices which different agencies send out in regard to the same vacancy; so that in most cases it is reasonably safe to assume that when a registrant receives a large number of notices from

an agency a large number of other teachers receive the same notices from that agency.

There is also a difference in the way agencies put their candidates to the expense of taking long railroad journeys to meet superintendents and committees. It is so very necessary in most cases to make personal applications that teachers should be willing to bear any reasonable expense; but to make a teacher spend several dollars for railroad fare when there is small likelihood of her securing the position shows lack of consideration on the part of the agency.

In the preceding paragraphs we have shown how an agency can do things for a teacher which she could not do for herself, and have given a few directions which may be helpful to one about to join an agency. There only remains now to divulge the secret of getting the manager of the agency to give one the preference when he makes his selection of candidates. And right here I would caution registrants about trying to get preferred service by offering to pay an extra commission; that is, ten per cent instead of five. Offers of this kind are sometimes made, but they are more than likely to make a bad impression on the manager and thus defeat their object.

Some teachers rightly feel that they do not get as much out of their membership in an agency as they ought to. But the fault does not so often rest with the agency manager as in their lack of ability to use the manager to their advantage. Why is it that one person gets better service at a store than another

person? Why do you enjoy trying to help one friend more than another? So among the members of the same agency some get better service than others because they have so impressed their personality on the manager that instinctively he thinks of them when vacancies occur for which they are at all eligible. There is an old saying, "Out of sight, out of mind." Applied to agency matters this means that a teacher should keep in touch with her agencies. She should call occasionally at the agency rooms, should write to them from time to time about her work and her ambitions, and should let them know that she appreciates what they are doing for or trying to do for her. In short, she should make them like her. Or, in other words, she should use the same tact in dealing with agencies that she uses in her regular school work.

In dealing with teachers' agencies there is one last suggestion I should like to make. If Miss Brown should join more than one agency, as is quite likely to be the case, the chances are that she will be placed by one of them, although the others may have worked quite as hard for her as did the one which actually secured her the school; and when she accepts this position she should not only notify the other agencies of the fact that she has secured a position, but she should state where the school is. And it would be well, also, for her to add a few words of appreciation for the efforts which the unsuccessful agency exerted in her behalf. This information will enable the manager to keep Miss Brown's papers up to date and be of assistance in placing her at another time. It also

makes him feel more kindly disposed toward her, for, after all, agency managers are human and like a few words of appreciation. After working hard for a candidate it is somewhat annoying to receive such a letter as the following:

DEAR SIR:—

I have secured a school and shall not need the help of your agency any longer.

Yours truly,

(Miss) —————.

CHAPTER VIII

THE PRIVATE SCHOOL PROPOSITION

DISCIPLINE, methods of instruction, and duties of teachers in private schools often differ materially from those in public schools, owing to the difference in conditions under which the two kinds of schools are operated.

In the public school attendance up to a certain age is compulsory; in the private school it is dependent on the will and purses of the parents or guardians. The public school is supported by the town or city; the private school, except in the case of an endowed institution, is dependent for its support on the tuition of its pupils. This means, on the one hand, that unless there are pupils there can be no fund, and, on the other hand, that the school is in a position to refuse pupils who seem undesirable.

In the public schools order must be kept; in private schools order is desirable, but it must be maintained as far as possible without giving offense. Public schools are not boarding schools, while most private schools are of this type, the teacher of necessity being on duty night and day. Public schools are made up of a cosmopolitan group of pupils from well-to-do, humble, and even poor families; the majority of private school pupils come from the homes of the wealthy or well-to-do, and represent in many cases

different sections of the country, some pupils even coming from abroad.

The private school is preëminently a school for the individual. The classes are small, so that each student receives a large amount of personal attention. For this reason pupils who have failed to keep up with their classes, when placed in a private school often not only regain lost ground, but frequently surpass their former classmates; and those who wish to fit for college in a short time can do it more easily at such a school.

This catering to the individual tends to make the discipline and methods of instruction radically different from that in the public schools; so different, in fact, that after one has taught in a private school for a few years it is difficult to secure a public school position. It is natural, therefore, to look for a more or less distinct type of teacher in each of the two school systems. The proprietor of a private school is not hampered by the rules and regulations of a school board in selecting his teachers. He can engage a woman of ability, even though she may not possess the frills of a college degree, so that we find in many private schools excellent teachers whose training would show up so badly on a registration blank as to make them poor candidates for public school positions.

The salary in private schools is often higher than that paid teachers in public schools doing the same grade of work. But there is another difference in regard to salaries which some teachers have unfortunately discovered. In public school work, while pay-

ment of the teacher's salary may sometimes be delayed, much to her inconvenience, she is sure of receiving it in the end, for the debt is incurred by the town and must be paid. But if a private school becomes insolvent, the teacher may lose the unpaid portion of her salary.

The duties of a teacher in a private school, whether of the day or boarding school type, cover a wider field than is usually the case in public school work. Often there is correspondence to attend to, both from parents and from prospective patrons who wish information about the school before entering their children or wards. Frequently, too, it is necessary to call upon these prospects in order to induce them to enroll their children. In some cases this work is done by the principals, but often it is delegated to one of the staff of teachers. In boarding schools there is dormitory supervision as well as supervision on the school grounds, a kind of work which is likely to become irksome by reason of the steady confinement which it imposes.

We have stated that the salaries paid private school-teachers are often larger than those paid in public schools; besides this many private school-teachers earn considerable extra money during the school year by tutoring pupils out of regular hours. In some public schools there are chances of this kind, but as a rule private schools offer more opportunities, as the pupils usually come from wealthy homes. Also, a popular private school-teacher is more likely to be invited to act as companion to some of the pupils

during the summer vacation, which often means a trip to Europe. Owing to the longer summer vacation enjoyed by private school-teachers, some of them find profitable employment in running summer camps, which are now so popular. Twenty-five or thirty years ago there were only five or six camps in New England. Now there are probably a hundred or more, some of them such large institutions as to take the entire time of the director, although the camps themselves are conducted for barely three months in the year.

In regard to getting a private school position by one's own efforts, the best method is to write to the schools whose addresses can easily be obtained from directories or the summer issues of the leading magazines. Most agencies do the bulk of their business with public schools, but there are some which have a large private school patronage; and in working through an agency one should be selected which makes a specialty of this kind of business.

After all, it is largely a matter of chance whether one goes into public or private school work. When a position in a private school at a good salary is offered the young graduate, there is naturally a temptation to accept it without considering what it may lead to. One's first position is not often a permanent one. In a year or two the chances are that another school must be sought. If this first school is a private school in the South or West, and the teacher, being an Eastern woman, wishes an Eastern position or one in public school work, she will find that her

teaching experience, however successful it may have been, does not count for its true value in new localities or different kind of work. In short, after teaching a number of years in private schools, it is difficult to change to public school work, and if the change *is* made it is quite likely to be at a sacrifice in salary; so it is wise before deciding whether to go into public or private school work to consider the matter carefully from all standpoints.

CHAPTER IX

THE YOUNG COLLEGE GRADUATE'S OWN CHAPTER

MANY normal graduates secure their first schools without the help of a teachers' agency; but with the college graduate it is different. Some do, indeed, secure positions through their college bureaus, but the great majority are forced to rely upon the regular teachers' agencies. On account of this fact, and because the ordinary college graduate is "different from other people," her case demands separate treatment.

Of all persons to be pitied the young college graduate seeking her first school takes the lead. The Fates seem to conspire against her. If she has specialized in Greek, she finds that it is seldom taught in high schools. If Latin and mathematics are her strong studies, all the calls include French, German, English or history, or some other subject on which she is "not up." For four long and happy years she has been living under idealistic conditions. Now she is suddenly brought face to face with realities. She finds that her theories about how things ought to be fail to coincide with the way they actually are. Things which in college life she considered of vital importance, in real life have a different value. She feels she is not appreciated and wonders what the reason can be.

Colleges close in June, leaving their graduates

stranded upon the vast shore of opportunity. Under these circumstances the prospective teacher naturally wants to get the matter settled as soon as possible. Just here is where a serious mistake is often made. There is no work more strenuous than hunting for positions, and the new graduate, tired out by the functions of the closing days of college, is in no physical condition to go through this ordeal the moment she receives her degree. What she needs is a chance to rest, recuperate, and get in touch with real life. Instead, then, of immediately seeking to secure a position, she should simply make a call upon the teachers' agencies in which she has registered, so as to become acquainted with the managers. This is quite necessary if she would get the best results from her membership, for it is much harder for any agency to work for a teacher with whom it is not personally acquainted. As soon as she has done this, however, she should "hike off to the woods" for a rest of three or four weeks. During this period her whole aim should be to have a "bully good time." If the agency sends her notices of places which appeal to her, she should attend to the necessary correspondence; but she should not worry if she does not receive any replies to her letters, for July is not the month when inexperienced teachers are likely to be placed.

But when the first of August approaches it is time for her to get down to business. She should notify each agency of her correct address and inform it how to reach her by phone, telegraph, etc. She should pack her grip so that she can come to the city at a

moment's notice. If she is planning to visit the city in which her agencies are located, she should advise them in advance, so they can be in a position to make appointments for her to meet superintendents. If her own home is at a considerable distance from the city or not easy of access, and she can arrange to do so, it would be worth while to engage board in or near the city, so that she can be on hand to meet appointments at short notice. As the season advances there are a great many "hurry calls," and those who are on hand to meet them stand the best chances.

From time to time it may be necessary to come to the city to meet an appointment at an agency, and at such times it is a good plan also to call at the other agencies. It may seem an unnecessary precaution to take, but experience has proved to me many times over that it is extremely wise for a teacher in leaving the agency rooms to inform the manager where she can be reached during her stay in the city, even though that stay may be only a few hours. Not infrequently a registrant barely leaves the agency rooms before some superintendent calls for a teacher to fill a position for which she is exactly fitted. But if she has not told how she can be reached, the opportunity may be lost so far as she is concerned.

These two facts, then, the college graduate should bear in mind: first, that most inexperienced teachers are placed after the third week in July; second, that a teacher who looks well and strong and feels rested is a far better candidate than one who knows more but looks physically worn out.

CHAPTER X

HOW TO AVOID AND HOW TO ADJUST COMMISSION COMPLICATIONS

THE subject of complications over commissions is one of the hardest to treat, but if this book is to be of real help it must deal with this as well as other business phases of teaching, and deal with it plainly. The thought of having to pay twice for the same place is disheartening; yet every teacher who joins more than one agency knows, or should know, that by doing so complications may arise which will make this possible. As a matter of fact, however, there is little need of being frightened by the thought of two agencies claiming commission, for the chances are not great.

We all know that when we take a journey by train there is a possibility of being mixed up in a wreck; yet the chances are very slight that this will happen. But if, before we start, some kind friend narrates in our presence tales of railroad disasters, it is quite likely to diminish the pleasure of the trip. So the effect of this chapter must inevitably be to arouse apprehension in the minds of some teachers; but to evade the subject for this reason is manifestly unfair. So while I recommend teachers to register in more than one agency because of the increased opportunities it gives, I also wish to state clearly that the time

may come when complications will arise because of such membership. Usually such complications can be avoided by the teacher's using due care, and when they actually occur an equitable adjustment may generally be effected if a teacher stands firm to have such an adjustment made before she pays either agency.

In order to have a clear understanding about double commissions one should understand very fully the demands and restrictions sometimes placed upon agency managers by superintendents who employ their help in getting teachers.

We have already described how superintendents have candidates apply to them through agencies, and how the notices of vacancies are sent out to the registrants, thus giving them the option of applying or not applying for the position as they may choose. If it were always possible to follow this method there would be little chance of complications arising; but sometimes superintendents do not want candidates to apply to them, but instead ask the agency to recommend teachers, or to furnish a list of teachers for them to visit. Here, too, usually, there is opportunity given for the agency to inform the teacher in regard to the matter. Occasionally, however, superintendents request a manager not to mention the matter to the teachers at all, so that it sometimes happens that an agency does considerable work for a teacher without her suspecting it.

Again, it is sometimes necessary to place copies of a teacher's papers in the hands of school officials before word can be obtained from her as to whether

or not she wishes to be a candidate, with the result that two agencies to which she belongs may be asked to recommend teachers and both may send her papers. Of course, if she does not accept the position she will not have to pay a commission; but if she is elected and does accept it, there may be difficulty in determining to which agency she is indebted.

It is the duty of an engineer of a train, if possible, to bring the passengers to their destination on time. When there is a fog there is danger in running his engine fast, but it may be necessary to do this. So the agency manager, acting in behalf of the teacher, sometimes has to do things without consulting her, but if it helps her in obtaining a position she owes him for the work he did.

With this explanation it is easy to see how complications in regard to commissions can arise; but, as we stated before, they can usually be avoided. Agency managers intend to be fair, preferring frequently to waive claims which a strict interpretation of their contract would entitle them to receive. In return they expect to be fairly treated by their registrants. When difficulties arise, therefore, and claims are made by two agencies, the teacher should not ignore or try to evade the matter, or write the manager a sharp letter, but should seek to find out the grounds on which his claim is based. For instance, a letter like this may be written:

DEAR SIR:—

I am much surprised to receive a bill from you for commission on my position in —, for I was not

aware that I was indebted to you. I wish you would kindly explain the grounds on which you base your claim. Awaiting your reply, I remain,

Very truly yours,

_____.

It would also be well to write the other agency in regard to the matter as follows:

DEAR SIR:—

I have just received a bill for commission from the — agency. What shall I do about it?

In a few days replies from both agencies should be received and further correspondence will be determined by the nature of these replies. In all the correspondence the teacher should make copies of every letter she writes, and the best way to do this is by the use of carbon paper. In writing these letters she should be careful of two things: first, to make each agency feel that it is her intention to pay her just bills; second, to make it plain that she wants the matter adjusted before she pays either bill.

In the settlement of complications over commissions, a superintendent may often render valuable help, for an agency does not like to push a claim which is considered unfair by a superintendent with whom it is doing business, for fear it may lose his patronage.

Unfortunately some agencies try to frighten a teacher into paying by threatening to put the matter in a lawyer's hands. As a matter of fact no agency likes to go to law over a commission, although some-

times it has to be done in order to get what is rightly due. Therefore when such a threat is made, which I repeat will not often happen so long as a teacher plays fair, instead of being disturbed she should say: "All right, Mr. —, go ahead on this basis if you think you have a good case, but it seems to me you will have your trouble and expense for nothing. I mean to be fair in the matter, and when you make me see that you are entitled to a commission I shall be glad to pay it." In case he should get a lawyer to write a letter, do not let even that frighten you, but go to some man whom you can trust and put the matter in his hands, so that future dealings will be with him instead of with you. This will save you a lot of worry. Preferably such a man should be a lawyer, but it is not necessary for him to be one. He should, however, be a person of good judgment.

Naturally it is good policy for the teacher to arrange a settlement on the basis of a single commission, but in some cases this is manifestly unfair to the agencies without whose joint efforts the positions could not have been secured. Where a teacher materially benefits by her membership in two agencies she should be willing to pay for this extra help. In such cases, if she will pay a third more than a full commission, the four-thirds thus paid can be equally divided so that each agency will receive two-thirds of a commission. In this way each agency sacrifices a third, and the registrant pays a third more, which makes a fair adjustment to all concerned.

But disputes over questions of double commissions

are not the only ones which arise. The fact that agencies often have to work without being able to obtain the direct consent of the registrant, as has been explained in a preceding paragraph, must sometimes inevitably lead to misunderstandings. When this occurs, before passing judgment on the validity of a claim, the ground on which it is presented should be clearly understood. And when it is shown that the agency had a hand in securing the position, the teacher should pay for the service rendered.

Agencies mean to play fair and teachers mean to do the same. But there are teachers who willfully cheat the agencies, and there are teachers who unwittingly do so. The great majority of teachers, however, are fair and square, and only occasionally is there an agency which is not square.

An example of how a teacher may unconsciously attempt to cheat an agency is the case of Mr. C., the principal of a grammar school. Through the efforts of an agency he became a strong candidate for a similar position in another town, and the chances looked so favorable for his election that his own superintendent had a long talk with him, during which he offered him an increase of salary to remain. Mr. C. thereupon withdrew from being a candidate for the other position and accepted the offer of his own superintendent.

Did Mr. C. owe his agency a commission? Of course he did. If he had not wanted a better position he would not have applied for the other school. If he had not considered his present position at an in-

crease of salary better than the other school he would not have remained. And if it had not been for the work of the agency he would not have received this increase of salary. *He was indebted to the agency because through its efforts he received the benefits of a new position or its equivalent.* Just here is where teachers are apt to get confused.

When a man is teaching at fifteen hundred dollars a year and an agency helps him to get two thousand dollars a year, so far as the commission is concerned it makes no difference where this two thousand dollar place is. It may seem at first that if he stays in his present position at a five hundred dollar increase it is not the same as if he went to a new place at two thousand dollars; but when one considers that he would have continued to teach at fifteen hundred dollars were it not for the efforts of the agency, it is hard to see why the commission on the two thousand dollars is not rightly due the agency, nor why this commission, amounting in all to one hundred dollars, is not a small amount to pay for the five hundred dollar increase in salary.

In the insurance business as conducted in Massachusetts there is what is called the standard policy, and some teachers' agency managers believe it would be a good thing to have a standard agency contract. Sooner or later, I believe, such a contract form will be adopted, and when it is, provision should be made for the settlement of questions involving complications in regard to commissions; but the insertion of such a clause cannot relieve a registrant from fulfilling her

obligation to the agency when she voluntarily receives its help.

“An ounce of prevention,” says the old adage, “is worth a pound of cure.” Complications or disputes of any kind are annoying and distract the mind from its regular work. It is better to avoid them whenever possible. To do this, as we have said before, a registrant should be careful to answer agency notices promptly, and not to allow an agency to help her unless she expects to pay a commission if elected to the place. A careful record should be kept of each position that is applied for. This record should show how a knowledge of the vacancy was obtained, when the application was made, etc. It doesn't make any difference whether these records are kept in a book, by the card system, or in some other way; but it is extremely important to keep them in such form that when a notice of a vacancy is received from an agency it will be evident at once whether the position is a new one or whether an application has already been made to the superintendent. With information at hand that will enable one to determine this, there is no excuse for letting two agencies work for one for the same position unless one feels the need of this extra help and is willing to pay full price for it. That it is sometimes wise to employ the help of more than one agency in order to secure an especially desirable position goes without saying; but one agency can usually give all the help that is necessary.

It may be of help to add here a few simple suggestions about the payment of commissions. Strictly

speaking, these are due when the positions are accepted. As a matter of fact, a teacher usually pays her commission after she has earned the money in her new position. Some agencies require her to give notes which will come due at certain times, while others simply rely upon her sense of honor.

Now, when a position is secured at the close of the spring term, or during the summer vacation, it will be September or October before the teacher can earn any money in her new position, so that an agency is often glad to discount the bill if the money is paid at once. For instance, suppose Miss Brown is elected the last of July to a five hundred dollar position. The commission is twenty-five dollars. Even though the payment is deferred until the last of October, the interest which the twenty-five dollars would earn if left in a savings bank for the three months would amount to only twenty-five cents, whereas an agency will often be willing to discount \$1.25, or five per cent of the bill, thus reducing it to \$23.75. By taking advantage of this discount Miss Brown can make her money earn five times as much as would be the case if it remained in the bank. But better still is to have a father or a brother who will enable her to take advantage of the discount without encroaching on her bank account.

There is no question of the fact that the agencies are doing good work in helping teachers secure better positions than they could get by their own unaided efforts; but whether a teacher joins them is voluntary with her. There are persons so constituted that they

hardly dare eat or drink for fear of being bitten by some microbe or other ravishing, microscopic parasite. But the majority of mankind still enjoys a square meal; and most teachers are wise enough not to let the possible possibility of possible complications over questions of commissions deter them from deriving the actual benefits which agency membership affords.

CHAPTER XI

WHEN SHOULD TEACHERS CHANGE THEIR POSITIONS?

MANY teachers believe that the best vacancies occur at the end of the school year. Undoubtedly it is true that more resignations occur at this time and during the long vacation which follows; but to assume on the strength of this that the summer is the best time to make a change is not good reasoning. It's the farmer who raises the early berries who gets the highest price. It's the teacher who can change when the right opening comes who stands the best chance of getting the coveted position.

There is a kind of unwritten law among teachers' agencies to the effect that it is dishonorable to try to move a teacher before she has taught a year in a school, or until the summer vacation. The same general rule applies to teachers, and many superintendents will not consider a teacher who has not held her position a year. Besides this, it is the logical thing to finish the term, and one term follows another with so short an interval of vacation that there seems to be no stopping place until the end of the year. Thus it is that most of the vacancies occur, as stated above, at the end of the spring term or during the summer vacation.

Now the effect of so many resignations being crowded into so short a period of time, and the fact

that the normal schools and colleges are at this same time graduating such a large number of students who expect to teach, is to give the superintendent a great number of candidates to choose from, and the inevitable result follows that the competition is keen and strong.

On the other hand, when a vacancy occurs in mid-term, instead of there being a large number of eager candidates the superintendent discovers that it is almost impossible to find any good teachers who are available. It is the repetition of the old law of supply and demand.

It will pay a teacher to take cognizance of this fact and arrange her work so that she can change her school in mid-term if the right opening comes. This does not mean that she should not apply for positions during the summer, but merely that she should not look upon the summer season as affording the only, or even the best, chance to make a change.

It is seldom possible to predict when any special vacancy will occur, but if we follow the rule of the old Farmer's Almanac and write opposite the months September to June, "BEGIN TO EXPECT VACANCIES ABOUT THIS TIME," we shall be sure to hit the truth. February is, indeed, likely to be a dull month, but it is a short one, and all the rest of the time there is something doing. When the schools open in the fall an unexpected influx of students may make additional teachers necessary. Then in a few weeks comes what is known in agency parlance as "the crop of failures." The custom in country schools of engaging teachers

by the term results in many changes for the winter and spring terms. As soon as there begins to be a feeling of spring in the air, proprietors of private schools, realizing that they will soon have to get out their new catalogues, know that they must select such new teachers as they may need in season to have their names printed on their faculty lists; and superintendents of public schools, in anticipation of vacancies in their teaching forces, seek the aid of agencies in making out their itineraries for the visitation of teachers who may be good candidates for the positions which they will have to offer. Following April come May and June, with an ever increasing rush of business. Toward the last of June, however, superintendents and principals are busy with graduations, and the first of July finds everybody tired and in want of a few days of rest.

After July 12 up to the last of August things hum with increasing vigor. First come the calls for experienced teachers. Then in August superintendents who have lost their teachers of one or two years' experience must find others to take their places. Not many inexperienced teachers are placed before August, so that it is wise for the young graduate, as is pointed out in another chapter, to take during July a much needed vacation, and above all things not to worry about "getting located." Even after the first of September a good many find positions, so that it does not pay for any candidate to get discouraged.

The study of the subject of vacancies is a most interesting one, for the filling of one place usually

means the creating of another vacancy. It is a kind of puss-in-the-corner game. Only when the vacancy is filled by the election of some one not then teaching does the game stop, or rather pause, for it does not stop, but immediately begins in some other school. No wonder that the life of an agency manager is a busy one; for it is necessary for him not only to learn the progress of these vacancies, but it is incumbent upon him to select the successful candidates before rival agencies do this. "Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty." The time to get a position is when the opening comes. The time to be registered at an agency is all the time.

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